

Transcript – Class of 1993, 25th Reunion

Narrators: Kenya F. Crumel, Holly Gordon, April Parker Hersh, Kathleen Lenihan, Anne Sudduth, and Sarah Vidal

Interviewer: Mary Murphy, Nancy L. Buc '65 Pembroke Center Archivist

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Mary Murphy: So, good morning. Welcome to the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women. I want to thank you all for taking time out of your reunion weekend to join us today for the class of 1993 25th reunion group oral history. My name is Mary Murphy, I'm the Nancy L. Buc Pembroke Center Archivist and I'll be serving as the interviewer for today. We are in Pembroke Hall and we are in the seminar room on the second floor. Again, it's May 26th at 11 am. OK, so I welcome all of you. You are joining a long tradition of women who are offering oral history interviews on their reunion weekend, so thank you again.

I'd like to begin the questions this morning in a round robin fashion before we get deeper into things. This interview will run for just about one hour, but as we begin I'd like to go around and have each of you introduce yourself, tell us, if you are comfortable doing so – only if you are comfortable doing so – a little bit about your family background and upbringing, and what brought you to Brown University. And then after that we're going to get into some of your highs and lows of your memories and times here on campus. So I'll go ahead and begin with you.

Kathleen Lenihan: My name's Kathleen Lenihan and I grew up in Chicago and then Las Vegas and what brought me – and my family background was, on my mother's side she had gone to college, but my father hadn't. And when I was in high school I knew I wanted to go about as far away as one could go from Las Vegas while remaining in the continental United States. And Brown definitely fit the bill and I, you know, I just, I just loved everything that I read about it. So.

Kenya Crumel: Hi. My name is Kenya Crumel. I grew up in Voorhees, New Jersey, it's a suburb of Philadelphia. My family background is both of my parents attended college. My dad went to Rutgers, my mom went to a small school in New Jersey called William Patterson. And my sister

graduated from Brown in '89 so I was very familiar with Brown, very comfortable here, and fortunate enough to be accepted.

Holly Gordon: My name is Holly Gordon and I grew up in McLean, Virginia, outside Washington, DC, but I was actually born in Kenya to two British parents and we moved here when I was little. And my mother had never gone to college, she was sent to finishing school and I think it was like a stone in her shoe or a pit in her stomach for her whole life because she never felt that she met her full potential. And so from the – as an immigrant family from the earliest days, my parents really, really, emphasized the importance and transformational power of education. Both of them were, my father was an engineer so he was, you know, an educated person or whatever, but – and so, they sacrificed a lot to send me to private school through my upbringing.

And I actually came to Brown almost by accident because it was a handwritten application at the time and it was not early decision, it was flexible. You could apply early and not, you know –

Anne Sudduth: Commit.

HG: Commit. And so I hand wrote it the night before applications were due. Never, ever – covered in white-out, never expecting to get in, but it was the most magical stroke of luck that I did.

MM: I'll have us pause for just a minute. Are you here for the 25th reunion oral history?

April Parker Hersh: Yes. I'm so sorry I'm late.

MM: No, please come on in. Please join us.

AS: So, I'm Anne Sudduth, it was Anne [Rouse?] when I was here. I grew up in Philadelphia, nearby. And both my parents went to college and I came to visit Brown when my older sister was looking at colleges and loved it and went home and told my school that I wanted to come

here. And they said, “You’re definitely never going to get in there. You’re never going there.” And I was like, stubborn then and opinionated and was like, “Yes I can!” So, that was good. A little motivation. I loved it here and yeah, so that’s – and now I live in Boston.

Sarah Vidal: Hi, good morning. My name is Sarah [inaudible] Vidal and I currently live in, pretty close to New Haven, Connecticut. I grew up in the [5:00] northwestern part of Connecticut in a pretty rural area. My – I went to a small public high school of about sixty kids who graduated and I think I was the first person in ten years to go to an Ivy League school and was told by my counselor, my guidance counselor that there’s no way I would get in. Well, I was pretty persistent with that and didn’t believe, you know, to go after my goals and my dreams.

I learned about Brown through several ways. One, I actually played field hockey and through different camps and just being acquainted with some of the different coaches and, as well as the alignment with education that was here. I studied science and biology in the strength of the curriculum here. My parents really believed in education and really did sacrifice a lot for me to come so I’m happy to be here today.

MM: Thank you.

APH: Hi, good morning. My name is April Parker Hersh, it was April Parker when I was a student. I was the first person in my family to actually attend college and no one in my public’s history – my public school’s history had ever gone to an Ivy League school so, yeah, it was quite a jump. I’m from northern California and I had never been on a plane back east when I came and the only reason I had thought to apply is because one of my good friends, his father had attended Brown and it sparked my interest. So it was the only school I applied to outside of UC’s and I’m really glad I did. And I got a scholarship that allowed me to come here and changed my life. Loved being a Brown student.

MM: Well, thank you so much for those introductions. So, now after – now that we’ve done some round robin, I – we’ll just kind of talk in conversation. I’m going to throw out a few topics and please just jump in as you feel comfortable and you’d like to share memories. So, first I’d like to just start out with your initial, your initial thoughts about being on campus. If you can

kind of put yourself back into the era. And for our listeners, this is a group of classmates who attended roughly between 1990 and 1993 which I think is a fascinating era in American history. It really sowed the seeds of what was to come in this country and what we are experiencing now. So, I think it's a really compelling time for you all to have been on campus. So, if you can just take us back and if anyone would like to jump in about your first encounters with Brown and what that was like to be on campus. Anyone?

KL: So, the first time I was on campus was when I arrived with my bags because being in Las Vegas visiting colleges just wasn't an option for me. And I just thought it was like this magical fairy land. I mean, if you remember, so, Las Vegas – there's a building, Las Vegas high school, it's a historic landmark and it was built in 1945 because that's what counts as a historic landmark in Las Vegas and I just, I just, like, all the plaques would say when the buildings would've been homes. I would just walk up to them and touch them. It was just amazing to me. And what I really remember was going up, and I was in Keeney Quad, and I went up to my dorm room door to go in. Remember, the counselors, they would put the two people's names on the door and I remember it was like a little rectangular strip with my name and my roommate's name and where it intersected we had our unit number 8. And it was handwritten and I – and despite the fact that, you know, the acceptance letter and all of the other materials we got, somehow it was seeing my name handwritten on the door that made me think, "Oh my gosh! I really do belong here." You know, somebody was expecting me and I got my name on the door, so.

HG: I have a completely opposite experience in that I said my parents were really focused on the education as a pathway to success and they had never heard of Brown and I was wait-listed at Harvard and Princeton. And they, my mother was really – I'm crying – my mother was so angry at me for that, for writing that early application letter because I had been at a boarding school and, a New England boarding school, it was super preppy, where many of my classmates were going to Harvard and Princeton. When my mother asked the admissions counselor why I hadn't got in and they said, "Well, because she applied early to Brown and that's where we thought she wanted to go." And so she was so angry and I had never, ever, disappointed her and we were driving on to campus and she was just saying, "I can't believe this is the place [10:00] you've chosen." And the girl across the hall was a friend of ours from Washington and she had, she was

a long legacy family in Washington, sort of a blue-book family, and someone my mother admired and her name is Caroline. And we bumped into Caroline's mother in the hallway and Caroline's mother said, "Oh, aren't you so proud of Holly?" And my mother just gulped and said, "Well, I can't believe the coed bathrooms." [laughter] And Caroline's mother said, "Well, I know. I know! I mean, can you – they'll get over it!" And so that was sort of a reconciliation, but it wasn't – so in some ways I feel as though Brown picked me. And it wasn't for another, a year later my mother was on a plane and she sat next to a Harvard professor and she called me breathless when she got off the plane and she said, "Holly, Holly" – she's British – "I sat next to this Harvard professor on the plane and he said if he had children your age he would definitely send them to Brown." And so it was remarkable to me that it took someone from another place, twice in a row, for her to sort of honor my choice. And what was so extraordinary about what Brown gave me was that it showed me a way beyond this very traditional, hierarchical, social class, controlled environment that my mother – and listen, I am so empathetic. She wanted the best for me and she was afraid if I departed from the sort of path that she thought was the ticket into the American dream – I mean, come on, Brown, right? That somehow it would go awry. So it – so, ultimately, I remind her again and again that the most interesting people I meet across the country in my work are Brown grads and that Brown grads are doing amazing things. And so, I think she gets it now, but it was a very, very rough couple of months feeling like I had disappointed my parents in a place where everyone else seemed happy. So.

KC: I mean, I can speak. So, as I mentioned earlier, my sister attended Brown, she's four years older, so we weren't here at the same time, but I had been on campus many times, obviously. And, so, I can't remember the first time because the first time was not when I arrived for my education, but I do remember being excited even, you know, after being accepted there's like a weekend. It's called A Day on College Hill or something, but there's a separate one for just students of color, I can't remember the name of it, but, you know, took the train up and, you know, I met some people that weekend and that was exciting. And then there's also what used to be called then, Third World Transition Period, like a week before all the other freshmen come. I was just excited to – and I felt very comfortable and I was excited to meet other people from around the country, Black people. I went to – I grew up in a suburb, you know, a primarily White suburb so, you know, I was at the top of my class in high school, but a lot of the other Black

students were not, so I was a little bit ostracized in that way through, you know, sounding White or, you know, just focusing on being studious. So, being here and meeting other likeminded, ambitious Black people at Brown was just a wonderful experience. I mean, I will say freshmen year I was just sort of still in my shell and I didn't really explore as much as I would have liked to or, in hind sight, but I guess we'll get to the Brown experience later. But, but it was still sort of like a coming home thing for me, coming here so it was good.

AS: Yeah, I was in Hope College for my freshman dorm right on the green and – it was, I don't know if it still is. But then it was a dorm that was specifically an environmental dorm and so, and it was really interesting because they were trying out all different kinds of behavior change strategies and ways of encouraging living sustainably within the dorm and I now do environmental sustainability consulting. But it was, it was like an all-encompassing experience [15:00] to be in a dorm where that was the focus, right. Right from freshman year. And I feel like those experiences have definitely influenced the choices I ended up making. But I think I was randomly assigned there. Maybe I filled out that that was an interest, it certainly was an interest, but I always think that that is interesting how like, life, these funny small, seemingly small things end up influencing the choices and the outcomes later. But I do, I also feel like that first, you know, those first couple weeks on campus I feel like, we were talking about this with somebody last night, that I had myopia, you know, I could only see like right in front of my dorm and walk to my mail box and back. And then like three days later I could see the whole green and then four days later I could see to Waterman Street, right? And then now we've come back and I feel like I can actually say, "Wow, look at all these, you know – " yeah. And then I remember thinking, like, when we come back for our seventy-fifth we'll have these even bigger, right?

SV: It's great that you say that. So I did do field hockey here and so I was actually in preseason when we first came in so, like, you know, it was so – my days were so structured. Like, we had [inaudible] it was so structured that it was, you know, it was great because, you know, immediately into things and so forth, but there was a lot to take on, not only adjusting to that, but then also, completely different environment. I was actually in Keeney Quad as well in one of the big units. It was really, it was such a great experience just seeing just the amount of diversity and different thoughts and I was very fortunate to have a wonderful roommate as well so, you know,

it was always. Others you could see had the roommate environment to kind of – some things went well and some things not so well. That initial piece, right?

KC: I will say that that's important. I – my freshman dorm was New Pembroke all the way in the corner, like totally isolated and I didn't know that then, but if you wanted to be where the freshmen were it was definitely on Keeney Quad, so. Yeah, I think that was – they need to change that.

KL: I don't think – they don't, they don't put the freshmen there. My daughter is a freshman this year and that's one of the first things I asked was like, please tell me they don't put freshmen in New Pembroke anymore. "No we don't."

KC: Good, good, good.

APH: I distinctly remember, again because it was my first flight, which is crazy to think about now. Flying out from California, landing at TF Green, stepping out, and feeling the heat, feeling the humidity. So from the beginning the very air felt different here. And then being on campus – it's interesting to hear you guys. I love your recollections and how there's – I always felt like there were multiple levels, obviously, working at all times for us as students, a lot of which was cultural, and familial, and if you are legacy or not, economic and racial, right? And then there was academic intellectual. And of course they're all intertwined, but I distinctly remember feeling like it was an incredible leap for me as a person, which it's easier for me to talk about now than when I was in it. It was more challenging to make the cultural leaps that I made over time than it was the intellectual academic and that – I felt at home. It was the first time, because I didn't come from an educated background, and I went to a public high school where I was with a large group of people that were like me and thought big thoughts, and wanted to figure things out, and worked hard in school because that was interesting to them. And it was delightful. It was a delight. I remember just feeling like I was surrounded by crowds of people who got it, and it was very comforting and it helped me deal with the cultural shifts that were clunkier, took me more time to get through.

MM: So there was – in this period there was much activism on campus, just like in every era, but I sometimes think that the 1990s we get a little bit left out of that era, people considering it a moment of activism, but it absolutely was. So, I'd like to sort of turn the conversation no to sort of what was happening on campus, in your thoughts, and in maybe your relationship to some of the movements on campus that were happening at the time. And again, just for our listeners you have the – you've got a push into the Riot Movement, riot feminism, I don't know if any of you were involved with the Women's Movement at all or a feminism, whichever feminism is yours. I know that the campus [20:00] experienced very difficult times around sexual assault and harassment on campus and if any of you have any thoughts or memories that you'd like to share if you're comfortable, that would be very helpful to help enrich our history around the early 1990s on this campus. So, can I ask anyone to jump in?

APH: I'll jump in. I think we were here when the so-called "list" started at the Rock.

Group: Yes.

APH: The list, for those who don't know, was handwritten on the back of bathroom stalls in the women's bathrooms at the Rockefeller Library that included the names of men who had sexually mistreated women during their time at Brown. So, it was, you know – I think so-called "whisper networks" have been around forever in women's communities and it was controversial at the time. I do remember women feeling like, well yes, of course we need to share this information like, in some ways it seemed kind of natural. But I do remember there being an element of people feeling like well, wait a minute, where are we looking into the other side? Only one person is getting to tell their story and the other member of this interaction isn't involved. But obviously, with the Me Too movement in the current era it's fascinating to just see the progression over time of women talking to each other and sharing predatory information.

AS: Yeah, I remember that vividly. And I remember when, when I used to study down in that part of the library, and I remember when the university decided to take it down, right? Remember they painted over it and then the women put it back up, you know, and then it was like, I remember there being like, almost like a volunteer job of putting the list back up, right?

Like, there was no cell phone photos so it was like – but I think it’s remarkable now. What I remember at the beginning of that is being like, this was a list of like people who were repeat, like, there were the people who you needed to watch out for and people needed to know. And then it expanded and that’s when I think it got to be like, well, is there justice in this, right, and like what is the line? How do you define it? And a lot of the same issues that we’re experiencing now like, what exactly does it mean – what does harassment mean? What is the difference between harassment and – who should be on that list? I know someone on that list and so therefore do I, like, what does that mean for my relationship with them and should I defend them, right? It’s complicated, but I felt like the – to me, the now looking back the interesting dynamic is that the university decided to erase it and that the women, like that there was a conscious decision like, we’re not actually protected from this potential threat unless we’re aware, and how can we – we have no way of communicating like, that was the way of communicating and now it’s like so archaic, it’s like a cave painting, right? But that’s what we were doing, like watch out, you know. Like, don’t be along at night on 100th street or whatever, like it was just that kind of a thing. So, I don’t know. I’ve definitely thought like, your question, when you said the question, that’s what came back to me was like wow, the removal of that list and repeating and writing –

HG: Like civil disobedience putting it back up.

AS: Putting it back up.

MM: I didn’t know that. How many times did it go back up?

AS: I don’t remember.

HG: I feel like it was two, or three, or four, or five – like, it was definitely enough times that it was a thing.

KL: And this was big enough – do you remember there was a student who, there was an episode of the Phil Donoghue Show with Phil Donoghue – yeah. And I think it was Joselyn Brown and

she, and I don't know if the episode was exclusively about the Brown list or is was about, you know, the broader issue and they had somebody from Brown on talking about the –

KC: [inaudible]

KL: – I don't remember, but it was, you know, Phil Donoghue. It was really big time back then and it was just amazing, like, oh my god I know that person. She's on talking about what's happening, what people are posting in a bathroom. It was, yeah, pretty big.

AS: But it's interesting to think like how little time, like how much has changed and how hasn't it. I mean, I have no idea what the stats are on campus or anything like that, but just you know, this – the women's activism on campus today and how the issues are the same, you know, what the echoes are.

MM: Could I ask how maybe your relationship or your experience of that moment on campus, if any of you would like to speak more about maybe how that has influenced your feminism today if you identify with feminism in any way or, again, women's movements. Could any, would any of you like to speak on that?

HG: Well, I'll speak. Does someone want to?

KC: Go ahead.

HG: I can speak to something that's tangential which is it was also the time – and more around women's activism – it was also the time when the Supreme Court was being [25:00] rearranged and where it felt as though a women's right to choose was being, was under threat. And Anne and I and Nancy Lublin, and some others started an organization called Students for Choice and I had never – I was one hundred percent a caboose on a train that was moving, led my Nancy and Anne, because I had never participated in any kind of activism whatsoever, and Nancy and Anne seemed to know what they were doing. And we made bumper stickers and t-shirts, and we had meetings. And Nancy Lublin went on to create Dress for Success and now, most recently, Crisis

Text Line. And one of the things Anne and I talk about often is that Nancy knew how to eventize like movement building. And so we did these sort of campus demonstrations that were very visual on the green and, you know –

AS: Generated stories.

HG: – Generated stories in the Brown Daily Herald and got the attention of the leadership of the university. And we went down to Planned Parenthood and protected people on the way in and so, for me, being at Brown awakened my feminism and mostly – and I’ve had a, now my career has been around trying to make social change, and a good part of it around the rights of educating girls – the importance of educating girls around the world. But the, for me, again, coming from a very constrained environment of, that my parents had of super tradition which is, my father basically said, “Don’t speak up because then you’ll get in trouble. Always toe the line. Always ‘yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir.’” That sort of thing. “Don’t make noise.” To come onto a campus where everyone seemed to be making noise about different things and that it was OK. You could learn so much from your classmates and it didn’t matter whether or not four people showed up to your demonstration, or four hundred people, everyone had the right to demonstrate. And so Brown totally changed my attitudes around what leadership looks like and what activism looks like. And also, that you have so much to learn from other people who can have deeply held beliefs about things that you may not know are an issue, but that being respectful of other people’s beliefs and journeys is like vital to the human experience.

SV: I agree that Brown definitely awakened my feminism as well. I just kind of carried through my life of you know, going for things and showing up and just being – it just doesn’t matter who you know, who was in the room. Just being the best that you can be and setting a good example, right? So, yeah, it’s great, great story.

KL: So after, after Brown I was a high school teacher because I did – I concentrated in history and then I did the undergraduate teacher education program and I – my first job was out in the Berkshires. And it was an interesting group you know, people – you know, some – a lot of conservative you know, old, western-Massachusetts and then some definitely not. But I

remember when I got engaged I – the kids said to me, they said, “Well, what is, what is your new last name going to be?” And I said, “Well, I’m not changing my name.” And they – it was it – “Oh!” I remember one boy was like, “I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t marry somebody who isn’t going to change their name.” And I said, “Well, somebody who is going to say that isn’t a person I would want to marry.” And I just remember the girls like, “Really? You wouldn’t marry somebody just because of that?” And I said, “Well, but they, they just wouldn’t be the right person for me.” They were like, “That is very interesting.” It’s just, in education, it just influenced how I interacted with the students where it is very natural. You ask a question in a class and what happens is boys, you haven’t finished asking the question and their hands are all up in the air. And sometimes you’ll call on them and they’ll be like, “No, I’m not really sure what I want to say.” And the girls are just thinking, like I’m going to think very carefully. I’m going to have exactly what I want to say. And so I would pause and I would wait for them, or sometimes the boys – a girl would be speaking and a boy would just start talking, and the girl would stop speaking, and I would pause. And they – they didn’t, you know, these were just kids they don’t –

?: They’re unaware.

KL: They’re unaware. I would say, “Billy, you – did you see that Julie was talking?” And he was like, “Oh.” And then Julie would say, “Yeah, I was talking.” And just telling the girls – I mean it was just silly things like the girls would spend like this crazy amount of time decorating the locker for the football players and I would come up to them and I was like, “So how – [30:00] I know you have a quiz in my class tomorrow, you’ve spent an hour and a half decorating this boy’s locker. I’m just curious, like are you also going that?” And they would say, “Oh, right I have to do that too.” So just little, little things that you hope you plant and that they flower.

KC: I mean – I, I don’t think that I called myself a feminist at Brown, but I – I think that I just was raised to feel like I could do whatever I wanted to do you know. Not that I had the confidence to do it, but I – nobody ever said, “No, you can’t do that because you’re a girl.” So, but I mean, now I would say that I’m feminist and my husband actually is pro-feminist and teaches men and boys about changing their narratives of being, what is being a man. You know, anti-violence, all that stuff. So I’ve actually learn – continued to learn from him you know, it’s

built on the foundation you know, what I learned at Brown. And I'm sure somebody – we're probably not finished talking about feminism, but I –

MM: Go ahead, please.

KC: I did want to mention other you know, activism at Brown. I remember it was towards the end of apartheid so there was a lot of like discussion about –

Group: Yeah, yes.

KC: - divesting.

Group: Yeah, yes.

KC: And there was also the takeover of –

KL: University Hall.

KC: - University Hall, thank you, with regard to need-blind admissions. I did not go to University Hall, I was scared. I you know, what my parents would say if I was arrested or whatever, so.

MM: Can you set the scene for us? Can you give us some sort of color around that memory?

KC: I wasn't involved through planning or anything. I don't know if anybody else here was. I just remember one day you know, going onto the green and seeing like, sort of big sheets and banners hanging from there and throngs and throngs of people and then hearing about various classmates who had been arrested and just – I just didn't quite understand it all. You know, for me it was – that was a whole new, that was a new experience for me, but I, unfortunately I can't speak in depth on it.

KL: I was, I was there. I didn't participate. I remember sitting – I was doing work. I was just reading on the green and I'm watching the protest, and I was on financial aid – a lot of financial aid so, but I remember the protest and it was all about – it was the capital campaign that was announced, but we still weren't going to be need-blind, and they needed an additional fifty million dollars to become need-blind. And, and I'm, I – my liberalism is tempered with a healthy dose of pragmatism and I was thinking, could we – it's not that they don't want to be need-blind, it's that you know, this requires money. And I said, I didn't think they picked out that number for the capital campaign out of a hat. That was thought out and this is how much they thought they could raise. And I, I – and it seemed, I don't know. It's, it's – the demand that no. We need to be need blind now, I just you know, I wasn't sure how practical that was and so I wasn't participating in it. You know, I remember taking over you know, they went in and took over University Hall and people come streaming out. I just remember watching and thinking, where is this going to go? What's this going to go? And then, of course there were you know, blow horns like, if you don't vacate the building at 5 pm you will be arrested and, and of course, people were arrested. They seemed very excited to be arrested, of course then later it's like I, I'm really not sure I want that on my permanent record. So you know, and I just, I just, I'm watching thinking I don't know, maybe they missed the lesson on Henry Thoreau's *Lesson on Civil Disobedience* where he wrote it from jail. Like he, you know, it was you, you, you pay. There's a penalty to be paid. So, but I am incredibly excited when we did become need-blind and now with the Brown promise, that's, that's life changing for people.

KC: It is.

KL: So. Not that I wasn't supportive of the goal. I was just, I don't know, it tended to be a little

HG: Flummoxed by the practicality of it.

KL: The practicality. I'm like, it's just, to fail in a capital campaign is a really big deal. You have to hit that mark, you know. So.

MM: Any other memories of that protest?

APH: Yes. I remember that out senior year – you were mentioning before what was happening with the Supreme Court and women’s reproductive rights being questioned, and I was also on Nancy Lublin’s train at different times. We were roommates senior year and we had a house of folks we, let’s see – there’s a group of us who went to the march on Washington for women’s reproductive rights. So, myself, Jacqueline Kennedy, Nancy Lublin, Hope Jarvis, Caroline Pillsbury, I think a couple of others. We got a house for the weekend in DC and I definitely feel like I didn’t have en – I, I, I didn’t – I wish that perhaps I had had more of a healthy, healthier respect for the first and second waves of feminism and how much work had been done because in some ways I think I was a bit cavalier about the rights that I had as a woman [35:00] and the amount of freedom I had as a woman.

HG: Which we’re seeing again.

MM: Yeah, we’re going through that again.

APH: Right.

HG: What’s old is new again.

MM: That’s right.

APH: And so it, I’m glad I participated in that. And we were all very excited because we ran into Vartan Gregorian on the march and that was really nice to see him out there. But in some ways we – I, I wanted to participate in this roundtable because in some ways I was late to so strongly identify with my feminist values. And I think for me it was class related. Coming in I didn’t want to be in any way anything that I thought was fringe or separate or minority. I was like, oh, I’m just going to figure out how to be a Brown student. I don’t want to be in a sub-category because I felt like I was crossing a lot of territory on just my own personal journey. But it – But I have such a deep and profound respect for all things women, the sisterhood, I’m really happy this is a part of my life now. At least the seeds were sown. You know, it was nice to have some activist

friends like Nancy Lublin who helped bring us to that march on Washington. I wouldn't have done it on my own.

MM: I think – I'm just going to check the time. OK. So we're just a little over half way through. So I like to turn, turn the dial a little bit. Colleges – you've definitely reminisced about some of the wonderful memories that you had. Anybody willing to talk about a low? A challenging memory here at Brown.

AS: I'll talk about something. I mean, we've talked about this, but I think we had several experiences of having friends who had deep mental health issues when we were here and we were totally unequipped to handle it. And, and I don't know like whether that was just sort of something that we missed in our upbringing that we weren't aware of, or if it was the time, or how the university could've played more of a role. I mean, certainly there wasn't much advising. I don't know if we just missed the advising train, but there was really not much like, you know, adult conversation to guide and advise. But we, we had several dear friends who were like deeply, deeply troubled and I think that was really hard. It shaped my experience, a significant part of my experience here. And so I feel like I return to that often with you know, the wisdom of now. Like, what should – how did I not know how to act and how could you know, could I have done something differently and I. So when I read about the rise of you know, of anxiety and depression and all that amongst young people today, and I wonder for those friends of – or even for the students who are experiencing it themselves – like, how are they equipped, and are they equipped, to you know, be supportive and guide someone out of a dark place in a way that I was not capable of when I was here.

MM: Others?

KL: I would say lows, primarily around issues of financial aid. That was – and it wasn't, it wasn't even necessarily when I was on campus. I remember – so, summer after, it was probably after my freshman year. My mother's job had changed slightly so she was going to make a little more money and I just remember waiting. I knew my financial aid letter for the next year would come – must have been at the end of July. I don't remember. But I just remember the terror of

what is it going to be? Because if it's not enough I wouldn't be able to come. I believe it was sophomore year. So think, I've been there for two years, I've acquired debts and if I can't go back you know, the idea of, of being in Las – trapped in Las Vegas was not good. And I remember going to the mail box at the apartment where my father lived and checking for the, for the letter. And the day it came I can still feel myself shaking as I'm opening the letter and the relief that, oh no, it's the same and I'll be able to go back. But that just fear of what's going to happen?

SV: Yeah, and I would agree from an anxiety from financial aid. And mine was also consistent but it was like, OK, if this changes a lot – it's the uncertainty of still being able to be where I wanted to be. And that impacted my family.

MM: Can I ask you about debt burden? So this is something that folks in our generation do carry. Tell us about the legacy of debt, student debt.

SV: You know, for me it was definitely a driver of what I had to do in terms of my career and being able to support [40:00] my debt that I had taken on. In some ways it was a good thing because I think it gave a lot of momentum and drive to know what I need to do. There's no way I could have been as successful without that education, but it was always there. I wonder if some of the choices I might have made in my career may have done other you know, other disciplines or more non-profit earlier in my career versus doing more for-profit work. Just to be able to support and to live from that debt.

MM: And can you say what you do now?

SV: So I'm now, I actually, right now I am able – I've kind of gotten through everything. So, twenty-five years past, I'm actually, I work as a non-profit, as an executive director for a foundation that focuses on philanthropy for palliative care, more at time of a serious diagnoses, as well as community education programs. But I also do freelance consulting for biotech, strategy, and analytical as well. So, still kind of finding ways to kind of balance the two of those. But, yeah, I actually worked in biotech for about fourteen or fifteen years. You know, it was a

great experience and all – it was good. But really to kind of help support my loans and education furthering – I have a master’s in health, a master’s in public health from Yale as well, so, definitely a driver.

MM: Any others? Legacy of debt?

APH: You know, I was – I had the great fortune and luck to be awarded what was called the University National Scholarship. It was a full ride.

SV: Yay.

APH: Yeah, and you know, I, I – I know that we have much more of that aid now available, right, so maybe many more students are having the experience of not having to carry so much debt. That’s my understanding, right, the Brown promise. That’s kind of the idea. It’s fascinating hearing, hearing the pressure that – because I certainly would’ve been crushed. It would have been very, I don’t know, yeah it would’ve changed, it would’ve altered the course of so much that came after. And maybe because I was debt free I had, I had a considerable amount of freedom and I’m, I’m an artist. Maybe I, maybe I wouldn’t have had the ability to take a job that didn’t earn as much money. I was a graphic designer for eleven years and I’ve been a painter for the last eleven. Yeah, maybe I wouldn’t have gotten there.

MM: So I’d like to ask, so I – as I was reviewing the things that happened while you were here on campus, right, so – and actually I was just recalling. So, the Clarence Thomas big court case –

Group: Yeah, yeah. Anita Hill.

MM: – That is so interesting. At 1991, I believe, was the Time Magazine, that kind of iconic Time Magazine cover. And I know I’m sort of circling back, but I just wanted to make sure – that, that had such an imprint on the early ‘90s, and if you’d like to have – you know, just speak if you have any memories around that trial, or watching. And then also maybe kind of going beyond that speaking to diversity on campus and what that was like at the confluence of the

Anita Hill trial, race, and patriarchy, all in a big tumble. Do you want to – like, where were you when? Like, what, what, you know, do you have a memory of watching the hearing or anything like that?

KC: I didn't watch it live but I remember – I'm just trying to gather. Somebody else can go.

HG: It was over the summer, I think. The hearing.

AS: I was definitely home when I watched it.

HG: Yeah, I think it was over the summer and I remember – again, I'm going to cry. I remember feeling so angry at this dignified woman who was being put through this disgusting trial when it was – and I felt you know, I was not – then I was, I felt as though Clarence Thomas was almost being manipulated into this place that it was almost tokenism. This was my, this was my 1990s lens. I have no, I'm still sort of ignorant about all of the you know, I mean, whatever. I'm just giving myself a break here if you know what I mean. But I felt as though there was, that how could you find the one Black man in America who had these deeply conservative views to get onto the Supreme Court to check your Black man box? That's how I felt then and then I felt that this dignified woman – who would make that stuff up? Like, you don't make that up. And she was being maligned and everyone was going along with it. And you see it today in other news stories where like, their conversation should be over here [45:00] and it turns out that it, it like goes off down this red herring. And it's almost always the progressive cause that loses when there's a red herring kind of argument. When you should be talking about one set of things which is that the Supreme Court you know, the sort of celebration of Ruth Bader Ginsburg today and the identification that she was actually a centrist on the Court, but again and again she stood up for equality for every human that that has moved her toward the you know, to the left of the Court now. But that strict constructionist benefits those people who are in power when the piece of documentation was written right? And to say that you're a strict constructionist means that you're protecting a document that was written when there was a ton of inequality. And so here you have you know, is he the one Black man in America? No, probably not. But here you have a Black man – which I was hooray about – but taking a seat with a set of values and ideals that I

didn't think benefitted equality for all Black people. And in the context of, again, this incredibly dignified woman testifying about the most embarrassing interactions with her boss, right? And it just seemed to me like, why is – I mean, people were outraged, but the train just kept chugging down the tracks. It didn't seem as though anyone – it didn't seem that the outrage made any difference whatsoever. And I'm feeling that same sense of dystopia today where like, we talked this morning about the NBA guy who got tasered outside CVS! And it's all on camera that he did not resist and that there were twenty-five cops and that he was parked in the wrong place you know. And it's like, how do we change anyway? You know, you can feel it in my voice that there's this conversation and yet it's like the inequity just happens.

KC: It has a lot to do, I mean – the country thrives in you know, the status quo right? So there's just always going to be forces against people. There's people in charge who don't want to change. You know, the NRA right?

HG: That's right.

KC: So, like, you know. How, how, how are we still fighting for gun control or some thing, some kind of reform after you know, a room full of kindergartners is killed? So you know, it's, it's, it's – we're up against a huge machine. It's really frustrating.

And I remember, just thinking back about the trial though. It's, it's, it was – I remember feeling embarrassed and awkward. Like, it's just like you know, I felt terrible for Anita Hill and, and, and, there's just, there's always – that's the same thing I felt. Like you're cheering and you want somebody Black on the Supreme Court, but just not this guy.

HG: It felt like a catch 22 right?

KC: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, it's kind of like Ben, Ben what's his name? The Secretary –

AS: Ben Carson.

HG: Ben Carson!

AS: Right, who wants to take fair and equal housing out of their description or their mission or whatever. I think the other, the one thing I would say though, that I remember watching those and I remember watching with my mom, and my mom's a total political junkie and a fierce feminist and – but what I remember, what I think now compared to then is that we watched those, that, those trial days over and over and it was that panel of White men with Joe Biden and all them, right? All standing up there and like elevated, right? Looking down on her. But now we have like hashtag manel, when it's like a panel of men. Or like me, and make fun of the fact that like it's, it's, you know, right? It's front and center, whereas that was like, of course it's all men on that panel. Do you know what I mean? Like that was not a news story.

HG: Right. The question being that it was a panel of men was not part of the conversation.

AS: Right.

HG: It was all about whether she was lying.

AS: Right. Right, so the whole thing – so that context I feel like has changed, right, that like. And maybe that the outrage we feel about the fact that we're having the same conversations that we had in 1990 now, that women are feeling outraged about that to the point of running for office and, right, and –

KC: [unintelligible]

AS: Yeah. But it does seem appropriate.

HG: Well, social media allows us to be more powerful as a group. Like Me Too only works where you can actually report your Me Too. And where people of influence are brave enough to report their Me Too. It doesn't matter if you're writing it on the bathroom wall and it's getting pasted over. You don't have the power of multiplicity, right? And now there's an app for Me Too so that you can report – here's the other thing we know. We know that it's eight percent of men who repeat sexual [50:00] predators. And so those lists matter. Right. They matter because

you're stopping a cycle of violence and so there is an app that's called [Callisto?] and it allows you to anonymously report a sexual attack and the report sort of only goes live, if you will, once there's more than one. And then that person becomes of record, and then they, and then you can start to – and it's available for campuses nationwide. Started by an amazing young millennial. I'm not a brand [unintelligible], I don't think.

MM: So I think now, I'm just keeping close tabs on the time. So I would like to do one, as we sort of wind up into a close – one last round robin where, allowing each of you an opportunity to, if you came here today and wanted to share something and we didn't get to it in the topic session, please feel free to share it now. I'd also like to hear lastly what you are doing now and if you feel like your education at Brown drove – I think you already mentioned it did drive what you were doing. But just tell us more what you're doing now. And again, take this moment, we have some time left to share if you wanted to get something on the record today here. We can go in the other direction if you'd like to start that way.

APH: Sure. I can say that one of the things I wanted to express today is my gratitude that you are doing this; that this good work continues; that Pembroke had this deep history with our university; that the women's center has been here all along and I'm sad I missed out participating more when I was here at Brown. I think it could've been a nice home for me at a time when I felt rather untethered. It took me a while to get my bearings. And I wanted to come and make sure I said thank you to you in person.

And then what I do now, I'm an artist. I was a religious studies major when I was at Brown. I wanted to use my time at Brown in no practical way. I had no, no concerns of any parental oversight or anybody concerned about – I wasn't concerned about how it would lead you know, to economic stability in the future when I studied during these four years. And I, I wanted to study something, a subject matter that would allow me to touch on history, and global studies, and broad cultural shared experiences through traditions, through the vehicle of religion. And it allowed me to do that and it was amazing. And it's perfectly fine that it was unrelated to what I did later. I took to heart that I, that getting a good liberal arts education in the traditional sense of the word liberal, to learn how to use my mind at a higher order level than I was able to

in high school, and to take lots of different kinds of classes, would be a good, good use of my time. And I think it was. I think it was.

SV: So you know, for me being here is just such an honor on so many different levels. Not, of course from the education piece, but just who I am today from the sense of you know, how I show up as a mother, how I show up as you know, a colleague, as a boss, as a wife. And just being appreciative of open thought and discussion, and you know, hearing different sides of the story that you know – I was actually talking with, with some of my classmates this morning and just hearing at other universities where maybe a lot more conservative where that freedom of speech isn't as much appreciated, even today. And just what an honor to have that and be a part of it. And you know, the other piece too that I think really distinguished Brown, and I really very much appreciate it, is that when we were here it very, very, very much was about community, you know. Everybody talks about culture, the words really mean something from a culture perspective, that everybody here is smart, but we're here together. I remember a quote when we first came in and, I forgot who said it, but they said you know, look to your left, look to your right, there's a – I think it was like a ninety eight percent chance, I might have the statistic wrong, but it was like a ninety eight percent chance that you are going to walk out together. And what a different philosophy to set. And I see that in business. Like, I see I've been attracted to businesses where the culture is similar to Brown where you're in it together, it's not cut throat. You know, it's not me against you. It sets a really important example for others. And even the schools, the school that I have my daughter at, it reminds me [55:00] so much of Brown you know. It's like an independent progressive school where thought is appreciated, where it's project based, where they're doing sustainability. All those values that I learned here I just continue to move forward.

AS: I love that, yeah. I, yeah, my thought it somewhat similar. I love that you spoke first. I think that I feel like there was several experiences here that were like anchors, have been anchors. But then, but overall the idea of kind of openness and evolution that I felt like the school – I didn't feel like Brown, I feel like my sense of it today is that the school, the school was so committed to evolving and so committed to like, like the Montessori idea of follow the child, like that the students entered and that the students entered and kept the university relevant. And like, the

tension we experienced with the takeover of University Hall or whatever, that that was actually like integral to the identity, and the brand, and the sense of this place. And that I feel like that, the idea of like always learning, and staying current, and pushing yourself in the uncomfortable place of changing. And that it's like you know, building muscle, you have to, it like hurts to build it, right, but like it's actually hard to always change and that's actually the work, that's the good work to do. And I was an English major so like within this big university I like found my tiny little home where all the classes you know, and I took science classes where there was like four hundred people and I was like oh god, drop. Add drop, when is that day? Drop, right? And then like I you know, I was joking that like one semester I took five English classes. Like, what was I thinking, right? Lack of advising, right?

HG: Anne it's time to write that paper.

AS: Yes. It was like a book a day. A book a day. But what I feel like a major force in my life is reading. That I have used like a love of reading and a love of literature as my way to learn about everything in the world. And that I feel like you know, I don't travel that much, but I travel all over the world through reading, and I know about technology, and science, and history, and politics, and culture, all because of reading and being a critical learner through the written word. And that is such just a gift and so, and that was absolutely Brown. And like, several professors who I felt this deep connection to and that feels like such a blessing and something that I, I'm so grateful for. I'm so grateful that I found my way to the Brown you know, to the English Department, and the lottery system to get into a class, and all this craziness and so. So.

MM: Can I ask, do you have – just to jump in – do you have a memorable text that stood out as your, as your sort of best that you studied while you were here, by any chance?

AS: That's interesting.

MM: It's a very random question, but.

AS: No, it's a good question. No, I mean it's funny because during this time there was all this feminist literary theory. I don't know if anybody took those classes, but – and a lot of it was a super eye roll for me, you know? You know, it was taking these feminist ideas and putting them on top of you know, like really old texts – oh sorry. So, some of that was a bit of an eye roll, but it was still eye opening, right, to think critically and like, think about all these different pieces of writing as a feminist.

HG: You often say, “Oh, I read that at Brown.”

AS: Yes, I do. I'm trying to think. So, maybe I'll think of something as we go along. But I definitely –

HG: Talk about your career too, about Hope College and about what you do.

AS: Oh, so what I do now is I do environmental sustainability consulting, but I work specifically with K through 12 schools, so helping them to transform their campuses to be more environ – like, reduce their environmental impact and engage their community in building a culture that is more sustainable, and to weave that into their curriculum. So it is literally like I'm living at Hope College, right, and I'm helping to build little mini Hope Colleges.

HG: So, echoing the theme of gratitude, and so many of the insights of my fellow alum in terms of what Brown gave me, I would sum it up as for me, Brown totally opened up the world and it was, it, it was a campus where imagination was so celebrated. And the idea that I feel as though Brown is ahead of its time. If you think about that creativity and imagination are actually – and lifelong learning are the currency of the future, and that change is of, to be of value, and the idea that many voices make things better. Just like many lodging on Air BnB makes Air BnB a better company, or many videos on You Tube makes it [1:00:00] relevant, Brown was there before its time in terms of trying to amplify many voices and trying to – and its complicated, difficult, proximate work that is the work of the future. And so totally having, again, had this sort of lock step upbringing that you only do it a certain way, understanding that there's this big world of ideas and that bringing new ideas into the world is of value, was a huge gift from Brown.

And I now am, I am – was an international relations major. I, out of Brown, applied to the State Department to be a Foreign Service Officer and failed, and was pretty devastated. I failed because I wrote too many words on the application which there was a limit and you weren't supposed to cross that limit, but because I was a Brown student I did. Turns out the State Department's less flexible. So they asked me to reapply, but the whole stringent application process made me realize that I probably shouldn't reapply. And fast forward fifteen years and I ended up leading a global campaign for girls' education called Girl Rising that had a film at the center which we then, I brought to the State Department and stood in front of the four hundred Foreign Service Officers of the State Department and said, "I knew I'd get there some day!" So I'm a new Chief Impact Officer at Participant Media which is a film company that creates entertainment that has social change messages in every film and my job is to make that content make an impact. And so I feel as though so much of that was born at Brown.

And then the other thing that I would like to just go on the record as saying after being here during the administration of Bush senior, and my comments about Clarence Thomas, and sort of conservatism at the right, I've had a transformational experience more recently being a part of a leadership program that actually was started by the Bush Center and the Clinton Library. And I have a profound and deep respect that I didn't have an understanding of then for the work of both Bush junior and Bush senior. And a sense that as a progressive, one of the most progressive things that one can do is to sit down with someone who doesn't share your ideas and to understand what you do have in common, and often the goals are similar and our approaches are different. And that the more, even as a university that very much identifies as a progressive university, the more we can celebrate ideas that may seem antithetical to ours, but look at the humans behind those ideas and try to build bridges, the better. And so, I think, I, I just felt as though I wanted to share that too as we look to what does a Brown of the future look like? And I think it's one where we're really trying to get out of our comfort zone, even in our progressive sort of lens, if that makes sense.

KC: I wanted to echo some of the earlier sentiments. I had no idea that this project existed and so I was really fascinated when I you know, got the email and saw what was going on. So thank you for allowing me to participate. I, in hindsight, I think I should've taken a gap year between high school and college. I had no idea what I wanted to be at all so I, I, I was an econ and OBM –

organizational behavioral management – concentrator and I, I just didn't really – I knew I liked math and science, like I just didn't really have a solid picture where I wanted to be after college. But I knew that my father was you know, in corporate America, and I thought I would go into like finance. I did that for a year and I just knew my heart wasn't in it. And then I, I, I went and got a master's in public administration. I knew, like I always had been drawn to sort of like this how can we alleviate poverty, homelessness, those kinds of things. And so I worked in the nonprofit world pretty much ever since. I currently actually do work for a for-profit as a management consulting job, but we, we build the organizational capacity of nonprofit organizations. So, it, it, it's just crazy how things work. Like, I just feel like the education that I did receive here did apply to, does apply to what I do today, but I didn't know what I was getting it for at the time.

And I also wanted to say that, one other thing that really stood out in my mind about my time here was the LA riots. I remember, I remember just seeing the video, the footage of them pulling that guy out of the truck and hitting him and kicking him.

MM: What year were you?

KC: What year was I?

MM: Yeah, do you remember your year in [1:05:00] school?

KC: I feel like that was my junior year. Yeah, like '92 I think that's when that happened.

MM: That's right.

KC: Yeah.

AS: Yes, that's right. It was our junior year.

KC: Yeah, yeah. So, and again, we're still seeing this today you know, police being acquitted for you know, just ridiculous –

HG: Brutality.

KC: – yeah, just something that they should be in jail for. So I think that probably was my first time you know, my earliest really strong memory of just like what really happens in our justice system. And so I don't do that directly with work but I do you know, in terms of just, just activism and going to protests, and that kind of thing. Just like speaking out for and trying to be an advocate for just equality you know. And as well as raising my daughter to be able to speak her mind and be a proud Black woman and understand that she leads a privileged like, just not that we're rich, but just like that she's in a loving household and she is, is, is exposed – we try to expose her to all the things that are going on in the world. And just like how she can then also be – have a good level of compassion for others who are being taken advantage of, who go to prison for whatever reason. And just hopefully she can also grow up and be a part of the solution and than you know, just sort of being ignorant of what's going on outside of our little world.

KL: Yeah, again, thank you for this. As a former history concentrator I love an oral history project. It is fabulous because it's – I, I remember hearing a genealogist talking once, we do a lot of genealogy, and he was saying that we in the twenty first century are going to leave less material to future historians than those who lived in the eighteenth century. And it's not that the rich and the famous will always have their stories told, but I think about – I still have, I have in the, in my attic, a trunk full of the letters that I received when I was at Brown. I never threw a single letter that anybody ever –

MM: Do you still have those?

KL: Oh I do.

MM: Yeah, let's talk about that.

KL: I have the letters that everybody sent me while I was at school.

?: Wow, that's really crazy.

KL: Yeah, and, but we don't, we don't have those. We, things just with emails and text, and it's like you're keeping a journal that dissolves. So, things like this are –

HG: I have my journals.

KL: Yeah, your journals, yeah, are vitally important. And I, I'm just grateful to Brown because, I'm sorry, I just really feel it rescued me. It really changed the trajectory of my life in that I just can't imagine who I would be if I hadn't come here. I think all of the good things in my life are because I was at Brown. I mean, starting with my husband is also a class of '93. Yeah, yeah, we met freshman year. And my children, and where I live now, and how I just engage in the world. That's just not really something that happened you know, where I grew up. And that you just know when somebody says OK, who can do this? You know, I try to wait just to see if somebody else – but you know, you got to, you know, people have to stand up and do things. So you know, I'm in Town Meeting in my community, now I'm on the school committee because you know, where, where I live is a really wonderful school system, but it's just, it's incredibly intense in a destructive way for many students. And there's a lot of people saying well, we need to change this, or this isn't right, but you know, somebody has to actually get up there and do it. So, that's what I'm, that's what I'm going. And yeah, it's just, like I said, I'm just really grateful I had the opportunity to be here.

MM: Well, I think I will thank you. We will talk after the interview, but any physical materials you have that documents evidence of your life while you were here at Brown, so we will talk about that after the filming. But I do want to thank you just once again for taking an hour out of this really wonderful weekend to sit here with us and create a little history. And now you become a part of this ongoing program that's so important. Over three million unique page views on Brown Women Speak since it was uploaded in 2012.

HG: Oh great!

MM: So there are thousands and thousands of people all over the country and all over the world who are using, and will be using, your memories and your thoughts to study US history so I want to thank you for that. Thank you.

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